



East Fork Grande Ronde River, Little Fly Creek, and Squaw Creek Restoration

## CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

### PROPOSAL INFORMATION

**Proposal Name:** East Fork Grande Ronde River, Little Fly Creek, and Squaw Creek Restoration

**Proposal Date:** 1/7/2020

**Proponent Name:** Joe Platz

**Line Officer:** Bill Gamble

**District:** La Grande Ranger District

**County(ies):** Union

**Anticipated Implementation:** May 2021

**Signing Authority:** District Ranger

**PALS Tracking #:** 59384

**Project File:** C:\Users\briannacarollo\Box\01.brianna.carollo

Workspace\lag2020SmallProjects\Upper Grande RondeUpper Fly Stream Restoration

**Legal Description:** East Fork Grande Ronde River (1.5 miles), Tanner Gulch – Grande Ronde River Subwatershed (170601040101) – T 6S, R36E, S 10, 11, & 12. Little Fly Creek (3.0 miles) T 5S, R 35 E, S 4 & T 6S, R 35E, S 3, 4, 9). Squaw Creek (3.0 miles), T 5S, R 35 E, S 15, 22 & T 5S, R 34E, S 21 & 28).

**Watersheds:** Tanner Gulch - Grande Ronde River (170601040101), Little Fly Creek (170601040106) and Upper Fly Creek (170601040107) Subwatersheds within the Headwaters Grande Ronde River Watershed.

### APPLICABLE CATEGORY/IES

This proposal is categorically excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS because it fits the following category:

**Applicable Category:** 36 CFR 220.6(e)(7) (DM Required)

This category applicable for this project because it adds streamside vegetation to the channel to enhance fish habitat and aquatic conditions.



## PROPOSAL

The East Fork Grande Ronde, Upper Fly, and Squaw Creek Stream Restoration project proposes adding wood structures into 7.5 miles of stream. Each of these streams are located within the Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed. All three streams in this project support steelhead and redband trout. The East Fork Grande Ronde River provides rearing habitat for spring/summer Chinook salmon.

The district will construct channel spanning log jams into the East Fork Grande Ronde River, Little Fly Creek and Squaw Creek to add roughness, increase floodplain interaction and habitat complexity, and promote flooding. Project activities should promote longer periods of hydrologic production, decrease stream temperatures, and increase riparian vegetation.

Small debris jams will be placed in the streams at an average of 30 - 40 debris jams per mile. An additional 50 whole trees (10" – 12" in diameter) per mile will be spaced in between sites. Trees for instream structures will be harvested from within 200 feet on each side of the streams. All of the wood and racking material will be felled and transported to the stream by mini excavators.

### Project Design Criteria

- Operate equipment during dry ground conditions only
- Erosion control methods (water bars, replanting, sediment barriers, mulches or erosion fabrics, etc.) put in place before season-ending precipitation event
- Place effective ground cover over 60% of the disturbed soil after seeding
- Bank stabilizing trees should not be pushed over
- Retain adequate quantity of trees within 30 feet of stream bank for future instream wood recruitment
- Limit equipment passes over streamside areas to one to two passes, where possible, to prevent vegetation loss, trail creation, and compaction
- Prior to implementation a qualified botanist will conduct a field survey to verify the presence or absence of sensitive plants known or suspected in the project area. If sensitive plants are found, they will be avoided. The botanist will then evaluate the results and ensure consistency with the determination of effects presented in this Biological Evaluation.

### Mitigations

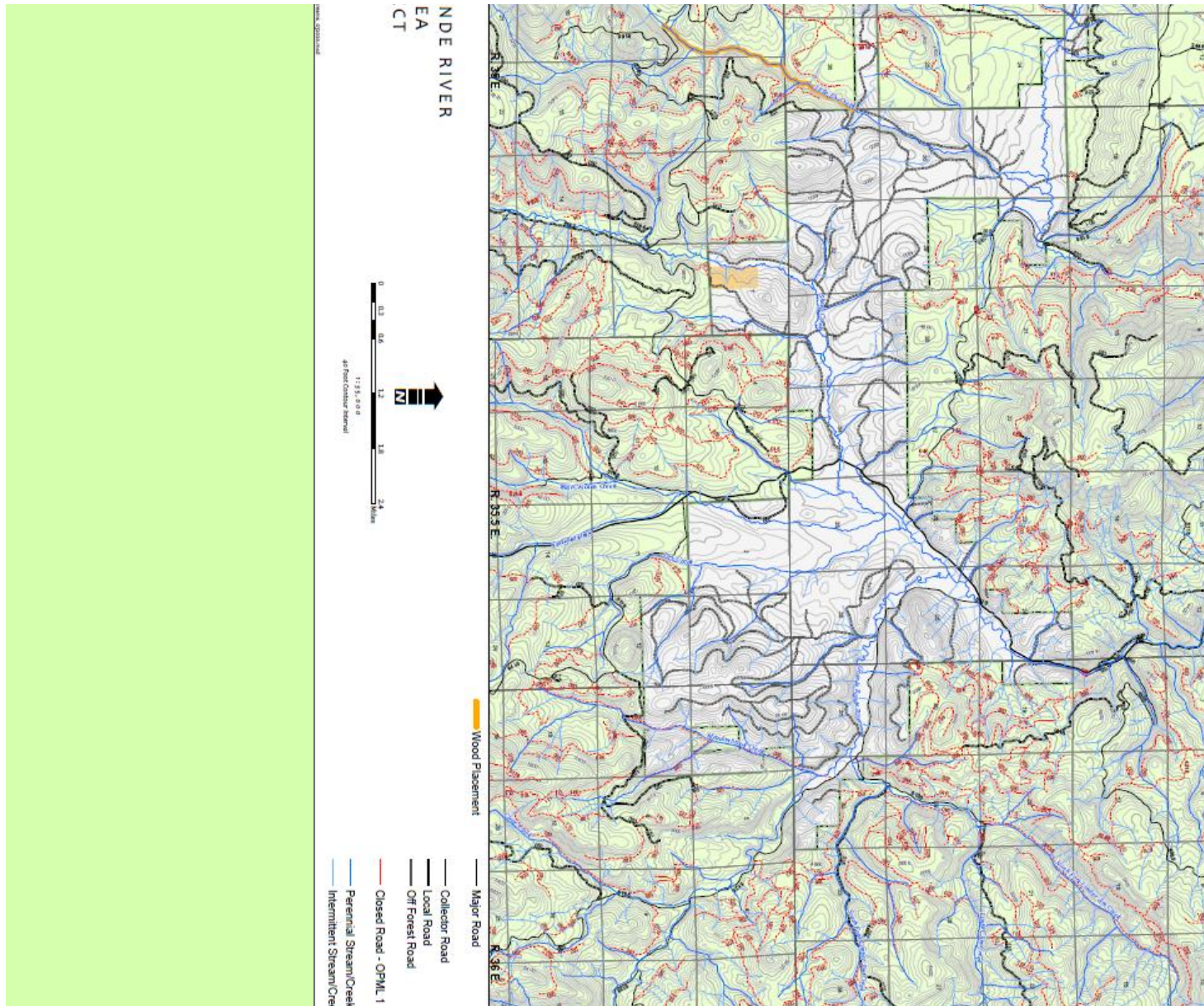
- Locally sourced and genetically appropriate native plant materials will be used for all revegetation efforts connected with project activities. Forest Service Invasive Plant, Botany, or Native Plant staff should be consulted for specific guidance.

### Monitoring

- Drone imaging will be collected, yearly, for five years by Grande Ronde Model Watershed
- Structure Monitoring will involve photo points of before and after operations occur. Follow up photo points would occur at year 1 - 3 after project completion. This monitoring will be completed by the Forest Service.
- Noxious weeds would be monitored, yearly, for three years after project operations. This monitoring will be completed by the USFS.
- A final report that describes the actual implementation of this project and associated monitoring would be completed in the winter of 2021.



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## PROPOSAL SCREENING

### REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

Given the nature of the proposal, the Responsible Official is requesting documentation to demonstrate compliance with the following regulatory considerations in addition to NEPA:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NFMA/Land Management Plan          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Consultation        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Endangered Species Act             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clean Water Act            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sensitive Species (FSM 2670)       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pertinent Executive Orders |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National Historic Preservation Act |  |

### AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS & PERSONS TO BE CONTACTED

Given the nature of the proposal, the Line Officer/Responsible Official is requesting the following agencies, organizations and/or persons be contacted to provide input to, or to be made aware of, the proposal. A brief overview of feedback or comments provided is included.

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR)

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

US Fish and Wildlife Service – Aquatic Restoration Biological Opinion (ARBOII)

### SUPPORTING PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Table 1: Applicable Project File Documentation for Agencies, Organizations & Persons Contacted

Documentation Type	File Name (if applicable/needed)
SHPO Programmatic Agreement ARBOII	C:\Users\briannacarollo\Box\01. brianna.carollo Workspace\lag2020SmallProjects\Upper Grande RondeUpper Fly Stream Restoration

### RESOURCE PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS REVIEW

The Line Officer/Responsible Official has requested the following resource areas to review the proposal to determine compliance with the regulatory considerations.

Table 2: Documentation of Review Completion

Resource	Review Complete
Botany	1/26/2021 Sabrina Smits
Cultural/Heritage	11/10/2020 Erik Harvey
Fisheries	11/23/2020 Joe Platz
Hydro	1/28/2021 Dana Nave
Soils	1/28/2021 Mary Young
Wildlife	1/26/2021 Rachel Granberg

## ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS REVIEW



## NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT (NFMA) – LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSISTENCY

The pertinent specialist has reviewed the proposal and made the following determinations regarding proposal consistency with applicable Land Management Plan direction, standards and guidelines.

<b>Botany:</b> Consistent	<b>Range:</b> N/A
<b>Cultural/Heritage:</b> Consistent	<b>Recreation:</b> N/A
<b>Engineering:</b> N/A	<b>Scenic Resources:</b> N/A
<b>Fisheries:</b> Consistent	<b>Soils:</b> Consistent
<b>Fuels:</b> N/A	<b>Silviculture:</b> N/A
<b>Hydro:</b> Consistent	<b>Special Management Areas:</b> N/A
<b>Lands/Special Uses:</b> N/A	<b>Wildlife:</b> Consistent
<b>Minerals:</b> N/A	

## ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

### THREATENED, ENDANGERED, PROPOSED AND CANDIDATE SPECIES &/OR CRITICAL HABITAT

The pertinent specialists reviewed the proposal and made the following determinations for threatened, endangered and/or proposed species:

Table 3: TEPC Effect Determinations for ESA

Species/Habitat	Status	Proposed or Designated Critical Habitat Present?	Determination*	Brief Rationale (or refer to other project documentation)
Summer steelhead, spring/summer Chinook	Threatened	Yes	NLAA	Long term effects beneficial to species from improved spawning/rearing habitat

\*NE – No Effect; **NLAA** – May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect; **LAA** – May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect; **No Jeopardy** - Not Likely to Jeopardize the Continued Existence or Adversely Modify Critical Habitat

## SUPPORTING PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Table 4: Applicable Project File Documentation to Support ESA Compliance

Documentation Type	File Name (if applicable/needed)
ARBOII	C:\Users\briannacarollo\Box\01. brianna.carollo Workspace\lag2020SmallProjects\Upper Grande RondeUpper Fly Stream Restoration





## SENSITIVE SPECIES (FSM 2670)

The pertinent specialists reviewed the proposal and made the following determinations for sensitive species:

Table 5: Sensitive Species Impact Determinations

Species	Determination*	Rationale (or refer to other project documentation)
Redband trout	MIIH	Short term negative impacts, long term beneficial impacts
Columbia spotted frog	MIIH	Proposed action is to use local material to slow water and create eddies and pools. This will restore the hydrologic function on the floodplain, creating more habitat for spotted frogs. Use of mini excavators for tree removal would limit soil disturbance, though there is potential for frogs to be inadvertently killed or injured during project work. Benefits outweigh costs.
Bald eagle	MIIH	Risk of disturbance to foraging bald eagles is low for all activities due to a lack of past nesting occurrence in the project area. If bald eagle use of the project area changes, mitigations would be developed to protect newly discovered nests or roost sites. The proposed alternative would positively influence aquatic communities, creating improvements in prey quantity and quality for bald eagles.
Lewis's woodpecker	NI	Felling trees for stream restoration could potentially open stands and improve foraging maneuverability for this flycatching species. In the short term, disturbance from treatment activities might cause individual birds to shift spatially, but these alternatives would increase the potential of the project area to provide habitat.
White-headed woodpecker	MIIH	Tree density would be reduced in areas where trees are harvested for restoration use, though this area is small in size. Although habitat use may shift in during project work, long-term habitat use will not be affected.
Gray wolf	NI	The action alternative would not affect wolves or their habitat because there is an abundance of prey and and most USFS management activities are compatible with breeding wolf populations with considerations for disturbance at dens and rendezvous sites. No known den or rendezvous sites are located within the project area. Treatments are not expected to impact big game prey availability.
Townsend's big eared bat	MIIH	If Townsend's big-eared bat occur in the project area, mechanical treatments could result in the deaths of individual bats or cause loss of roost due to human disturbance. Conversely, insect communities withing the riparian zone may benefit from this restoration project, indirectly benefitting bat species that forage near streams. Roosting habitat would not be significantly affected because this is not a primarily tree-roosting species.
Fringed myotis	MIIH	If fringed myotis occur in the project area, mechanical



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Species	Determination*	Rationale (or refer to other project documentation)
		treatments could result in the deaths of individual bats or cause them to shift spatially when foraging. Although the impact would be minimal, thinning stands typically benefits bats by increasing flight space in the stand. Roosting habitat would not be significantly affected as no snags or trees > 21 dbh (these trees represent future large snags) would be cut unless identified as imminent danger trees.
<b>Fir pinwheel</b>	MIIH	Variable retention thinning has a smaller impact on gastropod communities than complete removal of trees. Maintaining patches of trees provides microhabitats and lowers the harvest related loss of organisms, though treatments may increase microclimate extremes and change microhabitat structure (Jordan and Black, 2012).
<b>Thinlip tightcoil</b>	MIIH	
<b>Shiny tightcoil</b>	MIIH	
<b>Suckley cuckoo bumblebee</b>	NI	Due to the limited area that will be used to provide trees for the restoration work, there are no direct or indirect impacts on these species.
<b>Western bumblebee</b>	NI	
<i>Botrychium ascendens, Botrychium crenulatum, Botrychium lunaria, Botrychium montanum, Botrychium paradoxum, Botrychium penduculosum, Carex cordillerana, Cyrtopodium fasciculatum, Diphasiastrum complanatum, Eleocharis bolanderi, Ophioglossum pusillum, Phlox multiflora, Swertia perennis, and Trifolium douglasii.</i>	NI	If sensitive species are discovered they will be avoided.

NI – No Impact; MIIH- May Impact Individuals or Habitat, but Will Not Likely Contribute To A Trend Towards Federal Listing Or Loss Of Viability To The Population Or Species; **WIFV** - Will Impact Individuals or Habitat with A Consequence That the Action May Contribute To A Trend Towards Federal Listing Or Cause A Loss Of Viability To The Population Or Species

## SUPPORTING PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Table 6: Applicable Project File Documentation to Support Agency Sensitive Species Compliance

Documentation Type	File Name (if applicable/needed)
ARBOII Wildlife BE Plant BE	C:\Users\briannacarollo\Box\01. brianna.carollo Workspace\lag2020SmallProjects\Upper Grande RondeUpper Fly Stream Restoration



## NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT (NHPA) – SECTION 106 REVIEW

The pertinent specialist has reviewed the proposal and made the following determination regarding Section 106 compliance:

No historic properties affected - 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1). Section 106 Review has been completed for the project area and no National Register eligible cultural sites were found.

### SUPPORTING PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Table 7: Applicable Project File Documentation to Support NHPA Compliance

Documentation Type	File Name (if applicable/needed)
Programmatic Agreement with SHPO	C:\Users\briannakcarollo\Box\01. brianna.carollo Workspace\lag2020SmallProjects\Upper Grande RondeUpper Fly Stream Restoration

## TRIBAL CONSULTATION

Based on the nature of the proposal, the line officer/responsible official made the following determination regarding Tribal Consultation:

Consultation with American Indian Tribes has been initiated and is ongoing.

### SUPPORTING PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Table 8: Applicable Project File Documentation to Support Tribal Consultation Compliance

Documentation Type	File Name(s)
CTUIR – Information provided in 2020 and 2021 Program of Work Packages. January 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2021 email to CTUIR-CRPP sharing information and requesting comments Section 106 Consultation packages submitted to CTUIR.	C:\Users\briannakcarollo\Box\01. brianna.carollo Workspace\lag2020SmallProjects\Upper Grande RondeUpper Fly Stream Restoration

## CLEAN WATER ACT (CWA)

The pertinent specialist has reviewed the proposal and made the following determination:

This project is consistent with the CWA.

### SUPPORTING PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Table 9: Applicable Project File Documentation to Support CWA Compliance

Documentation Type	File Name(s)
AARS Database	<a href="https://apps.fs.usda.gov/gtac-tools/ARRRS/">https://apps.fs.usda.gov/gtac-tools/ARRRS/</a>





## **PERTINENT EXECUTIVE ORDERS**

**The line officer and/or applicable specialist(s) have determined the proposal is in compliance with the following Executive Orders (EO), which were deemed pertinent based on the nature of the proposal.**

- EO 11988, Floodplain Management
- EO 11990, Protection of Wetlands
- EO 12898, Environmental Justice
- EO 13007, Indian Sacred Sites
- EO 13112, Invasive Species
- EO 13175, Consultation & Coordination w/ Indian Tribal Governments
- EO 13186, Migratory Birds
- EO 13443, Facilitation of Hunting Heritage & Wildlife Conservation



## NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) – EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Pertinent specialists have reviewed the proposal and made the following determinations with regards to presence of extraordinary circumstances:

Table10: Extraordinary Circumstance Determinations

Resources Conditions Considered for Extraordinary Circumstances	Is there a degree of potential effect that raises uncertainty over its significance? Briefly explain. <sup>1</sup>
<b>WILDLIFE</b> Federally listed threatened or endangered species, Designated critical habitat, Forest Service sensitive species	NO, there is no uncertainty Rationale for Yes/No: This is a routine action with predictable effects.
<b>FISHERIES</b> Federally listed threatened or endangered species, Designated critical habitat, Forest Service sensitive species	NO, there is no uncertainty Rationale for Yes/No: This is a routine action with predictable effects.
<b>BOTANY</b> Federally listed threatened or endangered species, Designated critical habitat, Forest Service sensitive species	NO, there is no uncertainty Rationale for Yes/No: This is a routine action with predictable effects.
<b>Floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds</b>	NO, there is no uncertainty Rationale for Yes/No: This is a routine action with predictable effects.
<b>American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites</b>	NO, there is no uncertainty Rationale for Yes/No: Historic properties will be avoided.
<b>Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas</b>	NO, there is no uncertainty Rationale for Yes/No: Historic properties will be avoided.

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<sup>1</sup>Be sure to provide resource context for rationale discussions. Is there something unique to this proposal or existing resource conditions that would lead to greater intensity of effects than would typically be anticipated for similar actions?



## DECISION MEMO

### East Fork Grande Ronde River, Little Fly Creek, and Squaw Creek Restoration

#### U.S. Forest Service

La Grande, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

Union County, Oregon

This decision incorporates all previous information in this document and included in the project file.

#### DECISION & RATIONALE

I have decided to authorize the activities described above in the [Proposal](#) section, to include any modifications identified during environmental analysis and review of regulatory compliance.

#### APPLICABLE CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION & FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS

The [Proposal Information](#) section above provides rationale for categorically excluding this action from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and for using 36 CFR 220.6(e)(7) (DM Required). The [Environmental Analysis Review](#) section documents the finding that no extraordinary circumstances exist, along with findings required by other applicable laws and regulations, demonstrating compliance with the regulatory framework for the activities authorized by this decision.

#### AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS & PERSONS CONTACTED

A [list of agencies, organizations and/or persons contacted](#) regarding this proposal is provided above, along with a brief overview of comments/feedback received and how they were considered.

#### IMPLEMENTATION DATE

I intend to implement this decision July 2021.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Decisions that are categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are not subject to an administrative review process (Agriculture Act of 2014 [Pub. L. No. 113-79], Subtitle A, Sec. 8006).

#### CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact:

Joe Platz, Fish Biologist, 3502 Hwy 30, La Grande, OR, 97850, 541-962-8571

2/16/2021

Bill Gamble  
District Ranger



## East Fork Grande Ronde River, Little Fly Creek, and Squaw Creek Restoration

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